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FAMILY STATISTICS IN NEW ZEALAND

Certain data in regard to families are normally secured in all countries. The information regarding the origin of families is contained in marriage statistics; birth statistics show the progress of the increase in size of families, and the breaking up of families is shown by the statistics of divorces and by those of deaths of married persons. In census, as distinguished from registration statistics, the material presented usually includes marital or civil condition of population and frequently the number and size of families or households.

New Zealand, for many years, has published as part of her registration statistics, tables showing the number of widows and orphans left by the breaking up of families by death, in correlation with the ages of the fathers. The original data were secured by an additional question put on the death certificates in which the number and ages of the surviving members of the family were secured. The value of this information in connection with nation-wide provision for dependents of soldiers killed in war can easily be understood.

This new departure in vital statistics has now been followed by a detailed analysis of families and households existing at the date of the census of 1916.* Households are divided into those inhabiting private dwellings and tenements and other households, and the first group is made the subject of special analysis. Tables are shown classifying heads of households by sex and marital condition, age, and by number of persons, number of adults, number of children under fourteen, number of breadwinners, and number of non-breadwinners in the household.

Among the population 1,099,449 found at the census of October, 1916, there was a total of 238,066 households inhabiting private dwellings and tenements. Of these households 204,373 had male and 33,693 had female heads.

Ten per cent of the heads of households had never married. About half of these were persons living alone; in only 1,861 cases, or less than 1 per cent of the total number of families, were there children under fourteen in the family. This number would doubtless include some who had been forced to assume the responsibility of caring for a family, the children of which had been orphaned and left without their natural fathers and mothers; they would perhaps include a few unmarried mothers, although many of this group might be returned as married.

The marital condition of the heads of a small number of families, 1,566, was not stated. Of 211,633 families whose heads were either married, widowed, or divorced, 182,199 were reported headed by males and 29,434 headed by females. The normal family group with father and mother living would be included, in the main, in the group with male heads.

In the consideration of those families in which the head was a male, a point of some interest is distribution by number of breadwinners. A small number, 729, were reported as having no breadwinner. The great majority, or 56.8 per cent, had only one breadwinner each; nearly one-fourth reported two breadwin-

* Results of a census of the Dominion of New Zealand taken for the night of the 15th October, 1916, Part XII, Households, Malcolm Frazer, Government Statistician, Wellington, by authority Marcus F. Marks, Government Printer, 1918.

ners each, and one-tenth reported three breadwinners each. The average number of breadwinners per family headed by males in this group was 1.7.

The average number of non-breadwinners in families headed by male heads is found to be 2.9. The tables also give separately by cities and the rest of the Dominion the relative proportions in the family between the breadwinners and the non-breadwinners.

In regard to the number of children under fourteen living in these families, it appears that slightly over one-third of these families had no children living with them; somewhat over one-fifth had one child each; one-sixth had two children each; nearly one-eighth had three children each; not quite one-twelfth had four children each; and not quite one-twelfth had more than four children each. Among the entire group the average number of children per family was 1.6. In families which had one or more children, the average number of children was 2.4. Of course these figures do not represent the number of children which these families would ultimately have, since in the families in the group taken are included the newly established families as well as those that have lasted for many years. The figures present rather a picture of the distribution of families according to the number of children at a given time.

Besides the families headed by males, there were 29,434 families whose heads were married, widowed, or divorced females. On an average, in these families there were 1.1 children per family with a female head. Slightly over half, however, reported no children at all. For families in which children were reported living, there were 2.3 children on an average. It appears on comparison with similar families headed by males, that the average number of children is somewhat less in this group than in the other group.

Over half, or 57 per cent, of the group reported themselves widows. Two-thirds of this number reported no children living with them, and among the remainder the average number of children living with them was 2.0. It appears, then, that the average number of children living with widows is somewhat less than the number of children living in a normal family headed by a married man. The average age of the widows was about sixty-one years.

The group includes, besides the widows and the divorced, 12,316 females who reported themselves as married. The significance of this group is a little doubtful since the ordinary family, with both husband and wife living, would be reported as with a male head. On analysis, it appears that in nearly half of these families the head of the household was the only adult. The average age of these married females, heads of families, appears to be considerably lower than the average age of widows. Probably the great majority were wives of soldiers away at the front.

Other groupings are also made of the data. Heads of households are classified by economic status, whether employer or working for wages. The wage-earning group, including those unemployed, amounted to 112,000, while the group of employers and those in business or working on their own account, included 84,000 or four-fifths as many.

Heads of households are also classified by home ownership. In the entire group, 112,000 were owners of freeholds—about half unencumbered and about

half mortgaged. About 12,000 more were buying their homes on time payments. Ninety-nine thousand were renting their homes. In 15,000 cases this information was not reported.

The proportion of wage-earners who were renting their homes was much higher, 53 per cent, than the proportion of employers who were renting, only 25 per cent. Of persons in business or working on their own account, not employing others, a slightly larger proportion (30 per cent) than of employers, were renting their homes.

Other tables show the economic status in relation to the renting value of the home and the size of the household in connection with home ownership.

It is to be regretted that the tables are published without critical and analytical text. The material would be very much more useful if the statistical definitions of units and cautions in regard to the interpretation of the figures were given. It should be mentioned, however, that summaries of the principal statistical results of census as well as registration statistics are published in the official year books.

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FEDERAL RESERVE BOARD'S INDEXES ON CONDITION OF RETAIL TRADE

It has long been recognized that the condition of retail trade constitutes a valuable indication of the probable changes in business weather. Nevertheless, it has been the custom in current trade periodicals for the situation in retail trade to be reported in highly subjective and descriptive terms, that is to say, by such words as poor, fair, good, very good, etc. It was for the purpose of rendering current reports of the condition of retail trade in as objective terms as possible that the Division of Analysis and Research of the Federal Reserve Board undertook, through the Federal Reserve agent's department of each of the Federal Reserve banks, to compile and publish monthly statistics designed to reflect the condition of retail trade throughout this country. For this purpose the large department stores in the more important cities throughout the United States were chosen as a source of information. The data compiled each month are as follows:

1. (A) Net sales (selling price) for current month as compared with same month last year.

- (B) Net sales (selling price) for current season to date (seasons begin January 1st and July 1st) as compared with similar period the previous year.

2. (A) Stocks (selling price) on hand at end of current month as compared with stocks at end of same month last year.

- (B) Stocks (selling price) on hand at end of current month as compared with stocks on hand at end of previous month.

3. Ratio between average stocks on hand at end of each month during the current season (seasons begin January 1st and July 1st) and net sales for the same period.

4. Percentage of outstanding orders (cost price) at end of current month to total purchase (cost price) during the previous calendar year. This ratio is designed to